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Who Bought Louisiana?

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By

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WHO BOUGHT LOUISIANA?

"*Peace is our passion; wrongs might drive us from it; but we prefer trying every other just principle before we would recur to war.*" (Thomas Jefferson.)

Human history is crowded with dramatic moments. Suddenly, without foreknowledge or forewarning, the world becomes a stage, and men and women play on it their tragic or comic parts.

The midnight hour of April 13, 1803, was such a moment. The scene was Paris. The great figures of the drama were Thomas Jefferson, the American, and Napoleon Bonaparte, the Corsican. Robert Livingston, the American minister, and Barbé-Marbois, the French secretary of the treasury, also appear as actors; and in the background we see dimly the forms of James Monroe and Talleyrand-Périgord, statesmen and diplomatists. The theme of the play is the conflict between autocracy and democracy. The title of the play might be "Who bought Louisiana?"

Let us picture to ourselves first the character of the great American protagonist. Thomas Jefferson, at that time the most conspicuous figure in the western Republic, the central force of its politics, the dominating personality in its official life, was the son of a Virginian farmer. The tides of settlement, which flowed first up the valleys of the four great Virginian rivers, had spread to their affluents. In 1735 these tides had brought Peter Jefferson to a plantation on the Rivanna, one of the affluents of the James River. Here Peter patented land, and having wooed and won for himself a wife from the proud house of the Virginia Randolphs, he built a home in the wilderness and called it Shadwell in honor of his wife's English birthplace. A stalwart man, he lived here an energetic and useful life. He was chosen colonel of his county and vestryman of his church; represented his people in the Virginian House of Burgesses; and died at last in 1753, when his eldest son Thomas was but 10 years old. His epitaph might have been written thus: "Even the red Indian trusted him."

Thomas Jefferson was born and bred among the fine simplicities of that early Virginian country life. Heaven gave him neither poverty nor riches; the precious inheritances of his youth were the lesson of his father's achievement and the example of his mother's excellence. His vigorous and healthy body was strengthened and matured by the daily practice of wholesome outdoor sports. His flexible and fertile intelligence was trained under competent teachers in the

energetic gymnastic of the great masters of ancient thought. His heart, formed by nature to love and trust, was sweetened by the influences of a sister's pure affection and a friend's unstinted loyalty. Early orphaned, he learned in youth to bear the load of care and responsibility for his mother and his sisters. His means, ample for comfort, were unequal to ostentation or luxury, and the simple lives of his father's friends and neighbors, of his own guardians and masters, lent no countenance to vulgarity or vice. Under influences such as these he grew into his lusty manhood—a tall fellow of 6 feet 2 inches, muscular and active. He had huge hands and feet, with something like a slouch in his gait. His hair was red, his face freckled, his cheek bones were high, his chin projected. As a youth he was hopelessly ugly. As a mature man his charm of manner and conversation made his companions forget his plainness. Advancing years gave to his expression that rare benignity which shines even from his portraits, and which lent a certain beauty to his wise old age.

It does not appear that Jefferson touched intimately the other circles of social life in the Old Dominion until, in 1760, he was entered as a student in William and Mary College. Here at Williamsburg, the capital city of the colony, he discovered new phases of human existence. His kinsmen on the mother's side—Randolphs and Byrds and Carys—took him by the hand and made him free of the proud society of the Virginian aristocrats. Already the fascination of his complex nature seemed to cast its spell upon his companions. The brilliant royal Gov. Fauquier welcomed the country lad of 18 years to his familiar table. George Wythe, the greatest jurist of the colony, honored him with a notice which grew into lifelong friendship. One at least of his professors made him his chosen associate and profoundly influenced his intellectual life by opening to him the novel regions of mathematics and natural philosophy and by stimulating in him that love for architectural studies, which has left on our national taste so deep an impress. For a little the sweet intoxication of this new life mounted to the brain of the country-bred boy. He threw himself into the current which swept so swiftly past him; kept his race horses, like other young Virginians of his order and his time; decked himself in gay attire and danced with the lowland beauties at the stately colonial balls; tuned his violin and took part in the musical festivities of Gov. Fauquier's semi-royal court. But in his veins flowed still old Peter Jefferson's sturdy blood; in his heart lingered still loving reverence for the sweet pieties of his mother's life and the pure harmonies of his sister's spirit, while beneath the foundations of his intelligence lay the intuitive conviction that the simple democracy of his father and his father's friends was the relentless enemy of the moribund aristocracy of colonial Virginia, the ruthless foe of the insolence of privilege in all its forms.

Jefferson tells us that at last the day came when he set himself down deliberately to ask, "Which shall it be—horseman, fox hunter, orator, or," to use his own noble phrase, "honest advocate of my country's rights"? The question needed but to be asked; the answer lay in his priceless inheritance of sanity and virtue. Loyalty to his father's simple ideals of democracy had come to him as a birthright. Faith in the prevalent virtue and wisdom of the unspoiled

masses of his fellow countrymen had been reanimated by his new experiences. Upon these abutments Thomas Jefferson reared the stately arch of his great public life.

The year 1762 found Jefferson once more in his Albemarle home. He had been graduated from college, and under the guidance of Chancellor Wythe was pursuing with ardent industry those historical and legal studies which armed him for his warfare against British tyranny. He gave to this energetic training five full years. It was not until April, 1767, that he applied for admission to practice; but he then took rank at once with the most erudite and successful lawyers of the colony. His marriage in 1772 to a beautiful and affectionate woman filled out the circle of those influences which molded his genius and tempered the metal of his soul. Domestic life in his new home at Monticello, now rising with sweet informal loveliness upon the summit of the little mountain which overlooked his birthplace at Shadwell, revealed for him its ideal charm. The adoring wife filled the void left by the death of the beloved sister. Home was thenceforward a sacred asylum, whither Jefferson always yearned to bring his wearied body and his wounded spirit for comfort and for rest.

The 10 years following this marriage were the years of Jefferson's public life, which were richest in originality and in power. That noble series of state papers, which culminated in the immortal Declaration or Independence, was the fruit of the first half of this period. Virginia claimed the second half. In this period Jefferson remodeled the life of his native State, transforming it from a medieval colony to a modern Commonwealth. The system of entailed estates was destroyed; the laws of primogeniture were abolished; religious freedom was established as part of the organic law; education by the State was made a fundamental article of the Democratic faith; and the civilized world was taught how to humanize penal codes, inherited from medieval ignorance and stained with medieval cruelty. Not Virginia only, but every American Commonwealth owes to the initiative of Thomas Jefferson these cardinal blessings of American modern life. That he did not anticipate and better Abraham Lincoln; that he did not by the gradual emancipation of the negro slaves avert from the Nation he loved so wisely and so well the tragic miseries of a bloody civil war and the cruel degradations of an unrestricted suffrage, was the fault not of Jefferson's prophetic insight, but of the lack of vision of the Virginians of his day.

The close of this period in Jefferson's life was marked by the death of his beloved wife. Of their seven children, two only survived the years of infancy. Moved by their common sorrow, Jefferson promised his wife in 1776 not to leave Virginia while her strength was so small. Ten years of what he described later as "unchecquered happiness" came in 1782 to its pathetic end. Over the deathbed of the woman he loved so dearly he vowed that her children should have no second mother, and this supreme loss fell on him with no future solace to break its terriffic force. In after years his older daughter recorded the father's despairing grief, unconsciously betrayed, when by stealth she visited his room and witnessed the violence of his emotion. We are also told how she became for long weeks his constant companion in melancholy rambles

through the quiet woods and "the solitary witness to many a burst of grief, the remembrance of which consecrated the scenes beyond the power of time to obliterate." If Thomas Jefferson's daughters adored him, if his friends gave him an unchanging affection, if his political followers cherished for him an invincible loyalty, it was because his own heart had learned in pity and in sorrow the lessons of infinite love and perfect trust.

Recalled at last to the service of his country, Jefferson sailed for Europe in July, 1784. He took with him the older daughter, Martha; Polly, the younger, following later, formed that tender intimacy with Abigail Adams, which led in the end to the beautiful reconciliation between two of the great builders of the American Republic. The five years spent in Paris permitted Jefferson to witness the gathering storm of the French Revolution and to know many of the great actors in that frightful tragedy. He saw there the ending of an epoch which demonstrated forever the impotence of privilege to serve the general welfare of mankind. The claim that his political dogmas were drawn from the men who shared in this great revolt is no longer deemed worthy of credence. Jefferson came to France as a master, not as a disciple. The leaders of political thought in Paris sat at his feet. The woes of France might have been mitigated if these men could have translated into practice the lessons of moderation taught by him. Unhappily the frenzy of the populace soon passed beyond their control and the Reign of Terror was the frightful sequel. Jefferson had then returned to America and held a seat in Washington's Cabinet. The intimate and sympathetic knowledge of the French character gained from his five years' residence in Paris gave him a calmer patience with the excesses of the Revolution and added force to his counsels as Secretary of State. It may also be true that his later success in his dealings with the First Consul was due in part to such knowledge, guiding an instinctive sagacity above the reach of rules.

When Jefferson left Paris, September 26, 1789, he purposed to pay only a brief visit to his home and to return at once to Europe. This purpose he never realized. Even before he landed at Norfolk the newspapers had published his appointment as Washington's Secretary of State, and on March 21, 1790, he reached New York to enter at once upon the discharge of his new duties. The story of Hamilton's antagonism, of Jefferson's recoil, of the birth of a new party in American politics, of the swift growth and the triumphant vindication of its right to live, of Jefferson's retirement to the serene asylum of his mountain home, of the vice presidency and its four years of wise and capable organization, of the final debacle of federalism—all this is a twicetold tale and must not detain us. We who inherit the usufruct of the genius of Jefferson and Hamilton do well to forget their animosities. Let us remember only that both were great and both were good; that they gave to the service of the young Republic a loyal devotion; and that in Washington they had a friend and a leader who, loving both, knew how to govern both and use their genius for the common good. Nor let the Jeffersonian Democrat ever forget that at the supreme moment it was Alexander Hamilton who gave to Thomas Jefferson his effectual, albeit grudging support, made him the third President of the United States, and

cast down once for all from the seats of the mighty the malign figure of Aaron Burr.

As we turn our glance backward over this short story we may see the man to whose hands heaven had committed the destinies of America. From Margaret Bayard's facile pen we have a picture of his outer man, truer than any save a woman would be likely to draw. Born of a Federalist family of great distinction, she came from the very camp of Jefferson's enemies. Yet it is thus that out of personal and abundant knowledge she sketches the philosopher of Monticello:

> If Mr. Jefferson's dress was plain, unstudied, and sometimes old-fashioned in its form, it was always of the finest materials. In his personal habits he was always fastidiously neat; and if in his manner he was simple, affable, and unceremonious, it was not because he was ignorant of but because he despised the conventional and artificial usages of courts and fashionable life. His external appearance had no pretension to elegance, but was neither coarse nor awkward, and his greatest personal attraction was a countenance beaming with benevolence and intelligence.

So much for the outside of Thomas Jefferson. Within was found a temper of rare benignity and sweetness; a serene trust in that overruling power which makes for righteousness in human history; a spirit tenderly sensitive to praise and blame, but armed against injustice and calumny with a matchless fortitude and a wondrous patience; a stable confidence in the good will and good sense of his fellow countrymen; and such valiant hatred for every form of tyranny over the human spirit as no man had showed before his day and no man since has shown.

Too many of Jefferson's biographers have lacked the clairvoyance of sympathy, and his character and career have been to them full of enigmas. The tall, raw-boned Virginian farmer who smashed all the canons of Washington's etiquette seemed a being of another mold from the serene philosopher of Monticello, who built for himself in the wilderness a home graced with the beauties of architecture and the refinements of culture. The fiery young reformer who destroyed the privileges of the Virginian gentry and demolished the authority of the established church could not have in his veins the blood of the Randolphs and the Carys. Simple in manner and address, rude sometimes in attire, scornful of ceremonial dignity and social ritual, he hid beneath this assumed plainness a temper of extraordinary subtlety and matchless finesse in dealing with his fellow men. Careless of dignities and indifferent to office and to wealth, he was greedy of power and ambitious to rule. With the soul of the idealist and the mind of the philosopher he combined the business man's contempt for the fetters of a formal logic. The dicta of theory with him yielded ultimately to the data of fact. He reconciled his philosophy to realities and, if need be, was capable of holding on to the realities and coolly tossing the philosophy overboard. Such in 1801 was Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States of America, the man appointed by Heaven to meet and master the superhuman genius of the greatest despot of the modern time.

If the character of Jefferson is an enigma to his biographers, the character of Napoleon is the riddle of the ages. He was a monster of selfishness; yet he was adored by a million soldiers, who, without a murmur, sacrificed life itself for his sake. He was fickle as the winds; yet his ministers and his marshals were his devoted friends,

and no woman who came under the magnetic power of his attraction could ever resist the fascination of his address. He was an alien to France and was false to every duty to his adopted country; yet while he lived he was the idol of the French people, and he is to-day the heroic figure in their national history. His martial genius was so astounding that military critics have ascribed to him some mysterious power through which his adversaries were forced to act not as free agents but as subjects to his volitional control. In diplomacy, as in war, truth and falsehood were to him mere forms of expression, of which he chose freely the more useful. Faithful to no being save himself and to no cause save personal ambition, he was alike impassive to his foes and indifferent to his friends. As he indulged no enmities, so he countenanced no affections save such as exalted his own greatness and his own glory. We are now to follow the conflict between the autocracy of Napoleon and the democracy of Jefferson as it unrolls before us its story in five great historic acts.

First Act.—*The scene is Madrid.*

THE SECRET TREATY OF SAN ILDEFONSO.

The inauguration day of Thomas Jefferson as President, March 4, 1801, saw the United States at apparent peace with all the world. Yet more than five months before a secret treaty negotiated between Napoleon and the Spanish King had set up conditions perilous to the life of the young Republic. The placid optimism of the new President had his unsuspecting ignorance for its sole foundation.

The United States of 1801 possessed only a single free frontier. Her northern boundary was everywhere open to the British arms. Her western border was the Mississippi, beyond which stretched the vast dominions of Spain. Her southern limit was the thirty-first parallel of latitude, between which and the Gulf of Mexico lay the two Floridas, East and West, also dependencies of Spain. Only her Atlantic coast line gave her unhampered access to the markets of the world. Between this and the fertile valley of the Mississippi lay the barriers of the Alleghany and the Blue Ridge Mountains. Across them no canal was possible, and the era of railways was still far off. All this fertile interior with its manifest possibilities of production was commercially and industrially bottled up. Three Spanish cities, New Orleans and Mobile and Pensacola, closed every waterway which could feed the commerce of this vast section of the Union. It is true that the Spanish treaty of 1795 had opened the Mississippi to our commerce, and for the limited period of three years granted our shippers the right of deposit for their freight at New Orleans pending transshipment. But the three years had expired, the right was liable at any moment to be withdrawn, and still the Government at Washington gave no sign of activity.

By May 26 rumors of the existence of the secret treaty and of its hostile tenor began to reach Jefferson's ears. Livingston had already been nominated as minister to France, but it was not until November 11 that he reached Paris. Definite information then became available, and Livingston at once wrote back to Washington confirmation of the dangerous rumors. About the same time Rufus King sent from London full details of the treaty. France was to replace Spain

as the dominant power at New Orleans and along the western bank of the Mississippi. Jefferson was at last stirred to action; he knew too well that, if the transfer were made, Napoleon would prove a neighbor hostile to the peace and dangerous to the life of the American Republic.

The secret treaty, details of which were now at last revealed, was signed October 1, 1800, and had existed 18 months before Jefferson was apprised of its contents. The Queen of Spain belonged to a type of royal ladies not unknown to historians. Beautiful, voluptuous, and married to a dull husband, she found compensation for the magnitude of the King's virtues in the multiplicity of her own lovers. It was through one of these favorites that Napoleon's agent approached Queen Luisa, secured her influence with Charles IV, and thus effected the retrocession of the Louisiana Territory to France. The compensation offered by Napoleon and eagerly accepted by Charles and Luisa was a tiny Italian Kingdom for their son-in-law, the Duke of Parma. The territory surrendered included the city of New Orleans, on the left or eastern bank of the Mississippi, and the entire area of the right bank, extending from the Gulf of Mexico northward to the Lake of the Woods and from the river westward to the Rocky Mountains and Rio Bravo. The area equaled 10 entire Italies. Under the influence of Talleyrand, then his minister of foreign affairs, Napoleon had determined to build up for France a great colonial empire in America. The retrocession of Louisiana by the treaty of San Ildefonso was the first gigantic step toward the realization of his statesmanlike and magnificent design. The step had been taken, the treaty had been signed, and the legions of France were preparing for the occupation of New Orleans. The American President sat quietly in Washington—at first in optimistic ignorance and to the last in optimistic helplessness.

Now, at least, Jefferson was thoroughly awake. His flexible and fertile intelligence set itself to work on the problem of securing for the United States a commercial outlet to the Gulf of Mexico. For its solution he looked to war only as a last resort.

"Peace is our passion," he wrote at a later date to an English correspondent: "wrongs might drive us from it: but we prefer trying every other just principle before we would recur to war."

As the abutments of his domestic statesmanship were his faith in democracy and his trust in the people, so his foreign statesmanship rested always on two supports—political isolation and international peace. His two great commandments for America were to avoid entangling alliances and to abstain from aggressions. These he never forgot, following them with a philosophic faith and a philosophic calm almost incredible. As we watch his cautious maneuvers in the face of impending disaster and call to mind the triumphant end, we can only cry with the Psalmist. "The Lord preserveth the simple."

Jefferson's first step was to spur Livingston. Between the President and his minister to France a friendship of five and twenty years existed. They had served together on the committee appointed to draft the Declaration of Independence and ever since 1776 their relations had been confidential and cordial. Sprung from a New York

family of distinction and power, Livingston had done good service to his State and to the Union. Jefferson described him as an "able and honorable man"; but he was more than this, for he possessed insight as well as sagacity. His generous backing of the then unknown inventor of the steamboat attests his quality. Robert Fulton owed to Robert Livingston his immortality. Unfortunately, Livingston at the time of the Louisiana Purchase was nearly 60 years old and was exceedingly deaf—so deaf that he had to transact all business by writing. To enlarge the instructions given to Livingston at the outset of his mission, Jefferson availed himself of the services of another friend. This was Dupont de Nemours, a French economist and statesman, who had been driven from his native country during the Terror and had taken refuge in America. Dupont was on the point of returning to France, and Jefferson not only made him the bearer of an open letter to Livingston, but acquainted him fully with his views and engaged his personal support in the presentation of the American case to the First Consul and his ministers. By this letter and by Dupont's personal communications Jefferson expected to make Livingston an active participant in his policy.

The open letter sent to Livingston by the hand of Dupont is characteristic of Jefferson, and should be read with minute care by every student of his policy. It has been called the letter of an alarmist and construed as proof of Jefferson's panic fear. Nothing could be further from the truth. That wise old schemer, seated in his cabinet in Washington, did write the letter of an alarmist; but its purpose was to alarm Livingston, to alarm Talleyrand, if possible to alarm Napoleon. He presents as impending the two things furthest from his real intent—furthest from his true desire. The one was close alliance with Great Britain; the other was aggressive movement on the American dominions of Spain. Listen to a few of his ingenious sentences:

> The day that France takes possession of New Orleans fixes the sentence which is to restrain her forever within her low-water mark. It seals the union of two nations who in conjunction can maintain exclusive possession of the ocean. From that moment we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation.
>
> The change of friends which will be rendered necessary if France changes her position embarks us necessarily as a belligerent power in the first war of Europe. The first cannon shot will be the signal for tearing up any settlement France may have made and for holding the two continents of America in sequestration for the common purposes of the united British and American nations.
>
> If anything could reconcile the retrocession of Louisiana to our interests it would be the ceding to us of the island of New Orleans and the Floridas. This would at any rate relieve us from the necessity of taking immediate measures for countervailing the French occupation of Louisiana.

Time does not permit more extended quotations. Jefferson's purpose was to intimidate Napoleon by threats of an alliance between the United States and Great Britain, the certain effect of which would be to snatch Louisiana from his grasp at the outbreak of war in Europe. Livingston doubtless gave loyal support to the policy of his chief. But Napoleon was not a man easy to scare. The threats of a government which, from his point of view, had no fleet, no standing army, and not even an organized militia, probably seemed to him and to his marshals a delicious farce. The preparations for the

investment of Louisiana went steadily on, and eight months later all that Livingston could write was, "Do not absolutely despair."

Second Act.—*The scene is New Orleans.*

THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE RIGHT OF DEPOSIT.

Just six months after the date of Jefferson's letter to Livingston the Spanish intendant at New Orleans, Morales, withdrew the right of deposit. He took this action without specific instructions from Madrid, and against the protest of Salcedo, the governor. The intendant had direct charge of the revenues of the colony and was responsible not to the governor but to the treasury in Madrid. Constant remonstrances against deficits in the revenues came to him and he was instructed to seek for some remedy. Claiming that the right of deposit was used to cover smuggling, he acted on his own responsibility, and on October 16, 1802, withdrew the right, which, under the treaty, had formally expired in 1798 and had never been formally renewed. A measure so ruinous to the commerce of the Mississippi Valley was met with indignant protest. Men like Claiborne, then governor of the Territory of Mississippi, were anxious to occupy New Orleans and the other Gulf ports by force of arms and defy the Spanish power. Acts of war, however, were things which Jefferson could countenance only in the last extremity, "peace being indeed the most important of all things for us," as he said, "except preserving an erect and independent attitude." Never changing his policy, never losing his head, the old philosopher set himself once more to find an exit from his new perplexities by the diplomatic arts of peace.

The session of Congress was impending when late in November, 1802, the news of Morales's action reached Washington. Jefferson quieted the first turbulence of excitement by postponing all expression until the day came for his annual message. When this document was read to Congress on December 15 the following paragraph was the only allusion to the burning question of the hour:

> The cession of the Spanish Province of Louisiana to France, which took place in the course of the late war, will, if carried into effect, make a change in the aspect of our foreign relations which will doubtless have just weight in any deliberation of the legislature connected with the subject.

These cautious and temperate phrases were a complete checkmate to both hot-headed Republicans and hostile Federalists. Surely, they thought, the wily old President must have something up his sleeve to be so calm. Threats of war were quieted; symptoms of party disintegration disappeared; time was gained. One month later Jefferson was ready for his second step.

This came January 11, when Gen. Smith, of Maryland, carried the House into secret executive session and moved the special appropriation of $2,000,000—

> to defray any expenses which may be incurred in relation to the intercourse between the United States and foreign nations.

The motion was referred to a committee, was forthwith returned with a favorable report, and was passed. Jefferson at once sent to the Senate the nomination of James Monroe as minister extraordinary

to France and Spain, and this nomination was promptly confirmed. The President was thus enabled to intrust to one of his closest personal friends the conduct of the delicate negotiations which were to be undertaken with the First Consul. He could also furnish his envoy with ample funds to initiate some peaceable adjustment of the conflicting interests of France and America.

Meanwhile, through the Spanish minister in Washington, a successful appeal had been made to Madrid. The minister had not only sent a sharp rebuke to Morales but had urged strongly on the Spanish King the wisdom of restoring the right of deposit. The Marquis Yrujo was personally friendly to Jefferson and was also married to an American wife. His interests were thus warmly enlisted on the side of the United States. In Madrid also Godoy had returned to power as prime minister, frankly hostile to Napoleon and frankly friendly to America. The two ministers found it easy to win the consent of Charles IV to the policy they had at heart. The desired order was promised on February 28, 1803; was issued on March 1, and on April 20 news was received in Washington that the right of deposit was restored. The agents of the First Consul had opposed the measure secretly, but in vain. Jefferson's peace policy was beginning to have its perfect work. Give the old philosopher time and perhaps after all he could win the game he played so blandly.

THIRD ACT.—*The scene is Haiti.*

REVOLT AND RUIN OF TOUSSAINT.

We turn now to the series of events which for two and a half years delayed Napoleon's plans for establishing a vast colonial empire in America, which finally defeated this plan, and which rendered possible Jefferson's purchase of Louisiana.

Midway in the chain of the Antilles lies the beautiful island of Haiti. At the outbreak of the French Revolution nearly two-thirds of the foreign commerce of France centered in this tiny area. The climate was perfect, the fertility infinite, the range of production covered all the plants both of the Tropics and of the Temperate Zones. Of its 600,000 inhabitants 500,000 were negro slaves, the rest were about equally divided between the French creoles of pure white blood and the mulattoes. The taint of negro blood excluded the latter from political power and relegated them to a lower social caste. It did not, however, limit their property rights, which covered one-third the lands and one-fourth the personalty of the island. In the upheaval of the French Revolution these mulattoes pressed their claims for political and social rights. The national assembly supported them and the mulattoes became republicans. By an inevitable reaction the creoles became royalists and both sides took up arms. Then suddenly, on an August night in 1791, the 500,000 slaves and the 50,000 mulattoes made common cause and turned their united forces against the 50,000 creoles. The island was swept with fire and drenched in blood. The civilized world shuddered at the spectacle; at rapes and massacres, ferocious cruelties, ruthless destruction.

Presently from this welter of indecency and disorder a masterful figure appeared—a negro, grandson of a Dahomey chieftain. His name was Toussaint; he gave himself the surname of Louverture,

the gap maker, because everywhere he burst asunder the ranks of his enemies. Sober, vigorous, valorous, untiring, ferocious, treacherous, selfish, he made himself the undisputed leader of his own race, and united with the Spaniards to restore order in Haiti. In 1794 the French Republic proclaimed the abolition of slavery in the island and sent a Government commission to restore order. Toussaint, attracted by the bribe of freedom, deserted the Spaniards for the French. He was received into their service, and at the head of a force of 4,000 men swept the Spaniards out of Haiti. In 1795 the national assembly made him brigadier general; in 1797 they promoted him general in chief and gave him military command over the whole colony. He promptly drove out the British force which had attempted to establish a hold upon Haiti and speedily crushed all opposition in the French section of the island. By 1800 he had thrown off his allegiance to the French Government and assumed for himself both civil and military control; and one year later he made himself master of the Spanish section of the island also. In May, 1801, he gave Haiti a constitution, proclaimed himself governor for life, and assumed the right to appoint his own successor. In words as well as in acts he set Napoleon at defiance, calling himself the Bonaparte of the Antilles. Thus, the fierce African challenged destruction at the hands of the fiercer Corsican.

Napoleon was swift to conceive and no less swift to execute. He needed Haiti for a depot of supplies in his great venture of American colonial expansion. He determined to take it, to restore the blacks to slavery, and to crush this "gilded African," who had dared ape his own autocratic methods and rival his own defiant career.

He selected as captain general his brother in law, Leclerc, husband to the beautiful Pauline Bonaparte, and, next to Napoleon himself, the ablest member of the Bonaparte family. With 10,000 picked men, perfectly officered and equipped and provisioned, Gen. Leclerc sailed from Brest on November 22, 1801. By the end of January the French ships lay beneath the mountain peaks of Haiti. On February 5, 1802, Leclerc landed his troops at Le Cap. The negroes had withdrawn their forces and the once beautiful city was a deserted mass of smoking ruins. Toussaint, with his little army, held out against the French for nearly three months. One by one his generals betrayed and deserted him until he was left alone with a mere handful of men. If he had retired to the mountains he might have maintained indefinitely a successful guerilla warfare. But at last he was deluded by the promises of Napoleon and the overtures of Leclerc. He trusted himself to the honor of the French, and that was the end of Toussaint. Smuggled on shipboard, landed at Brest, hurried to a fortress in the Jura Mountains, he lay for months in his ice-bound dungeon, and on the morning of April 7, 1803, Toussaint was found dead in his prison cell.

Meanwhile the half million ex-slaves of Haiti had learned Napoleon's purpose to enslave them again. They fled for refuge to the fastnesses of the mountains and defied Leclerc and his soldiers. In September, 1802, yellow fever broke out in the French camps. Presently Leclerc wrote Napoleon that of 28,000 men furnished to him he had left only 4,000 effectives. One month later Leclerc followed his army to the grave, and the Paris journals of January 7, 1803, announced the practical destruction of the entire force and the col-

lapse of the French expedition for the reduction of Haiti. The same terrible malady which wrecked the French engineers in Panama annihilated the French soldiers in Haiti. Napoleon's splendid plan for a vast French colonial empire in America was brought to ruin by "Yellow Jack," not by Toussaint.

Fourth Act.—*The scene is Paris.*

THE SIGNING OF THE TREATY.

Jefferson's letters express so plainly his purposes in adding Monroe to his diplomatic corps that the prevalent misconceptions of those purposes seem to show a lack of candor in the reader rather than a lack of clearness in the writer. His purpose was threefold:

First. To commit the direction of these negotiations to a person of distinguished competence, fully apprised by both oral and written communications of his intentions, and thus enabled to act independently in such an emergency as might make it impossible to await intelligence from Washington.

Second. To accredit this person to the courts of both France and Spain, so that whether valid title to the territory acquired must be sought in Paris or Madrid, the necessary negotiations might be promptly concluded.

Third. To provide for possible failure in both Paris and Madrid by sending an envoy who could be trusted, should it become necessary, to sound the purposes of the British Government and ascertain in London the possibilities of an alliance, offensive and defensive, between England and America against the aggressive policy of Napoleon.

To meet all conditions the best man Jefferson could find was James Monroe. In 1780, after four years of service in the Continental armies, he began under Jefferson's personal guidance the study of law. This relation of master and disciple became the foundation of a lifelong friendship. Monroe's subsequent career had been in every way honorable to him. An earlier mission of two years to Paris, ineffectual in results, had nevertheless given him some personal knowledge of the French. He had none of the genius of Jefferson, but he possessed admirable qualifications for the task now confided to him—the perfect confidence of his chief, perfect sympathy with his political ideals, a mind both clear and robust, the habit of patient scrutiny in the study of problems, and resolute firmness in the maintenance of his conclusions.

Monroe sailed from America on March 8, 1803; landed in France on April 10, and shortly after midday on April 12 descended at the door of his hotel in Paris. The next day was passed by the two ministers together in examining papers and discussing plans. Livingston thus learned from Monroe the President's expectations and at the same time received his latest written instructions. As far as they concerned the diplomatic situation in the European capitals the following extract gives their general tenor:

> We must know at once whether we can acquire New Orleans or not. We are satisfied nothing else will secure us against war at no distant period. For this purpose it was necessary that the negotiators should be fully possessed of every idea we have on the subject, so as to meet the propositions of the opposite party

in whatever form they may be offered and give them a shape admissible by us, without being obliged to await new instructions hence.

With this view we have joined Mr. Monroe to yourself. The official and verbal communications to you by Mr. Monroe will be so full and minute that I need not trouble you with an inofficial repetition of them. The future destinies of our country hang on the event of this negotiation, and I am sure they could not be placed in more able or more zealous hands. On our parts we shall be satisfied that what you do not effect can not be effected.

Men who desire to belittle Jefferson are fond of describing him as a "tall, raw boned Virginia farmer," and of hinting, rather than asserting, a lack of straightforwardness in his methods. The writer has known many Virginia farmers and is glad to bear testimony that Jefferson, not in appearance only, but in the infinite candor and courtesy shown in this letter to Livingston, was not unworthy of a place in their class.

Men familiar with Jeffersonian chronology will not easily forget that April 13 was Jefferson's birthday. On the afternoon of that day Livingston was entertaining Monroe with other friends in his apartments in Paris. Even to-day many old houses in the French capital open on walled-in gardens, beautiful with spreading trees and fragrant shrubberies. On this afternoon, as the host looked out through the window, he saw his friend Marbois walking in the garden of the house. He called him in and made him sit down to coffee with his other guests. Before Marbois left he managed to explain to the deaf old diplomatist that, after the guests separated, Livingston must come to Marbois's home. On this night in Paris, then, Napoleon, through Marbois, made his definite offer of Louisiana to Jefferson, through Livingston. The price named, after some ineffectual haggling, was 80,000,000 francs—60,000,000 for Napoleon, 20,000,000 to cover the American spoliation claims against France. At midnight Livingston left Marbois without having accepted the offer, saying that he must confer further with Monroe. But as he at once wrote home to Jefferson of his success, it is plain that, in spite of apparent reluctance, he was already assured of Monroe's support and was already determined upon the Louisiana purchase. No one will begrudge Livingston his triumph, and it is pleasant to remember that Jefferson frankly credited him with his success. "Your treaty," he wrote him, "obtained nearly a general approbation," and told him how the Senate had approved it by a vote of 24 to 7, and how the House of Representatives had, by a vote of 89 to 23, made provision for its execution.

The story of the events which led up to Napoleon's tender shows that Livingston's diplomatic labors had little to do with the final outcome. The American minister had proved himself assiduous, patient, energetic, untiring. No delays could outweary him, no rebuffs dishearten him. When he complained that his Government would think him "a very indolent negotiator" Talleyrand promised him a written certificate to the effect that he was "the most importunate Talleyrand had ever met with." But despite all his labors the results were insignificant. Constantly he offered to buy the eastern bank of the Mississippi—New Orleans and the Floridas—never discovering that what he offered to buy Napoleon did not have to sell. The real reasons of the First Consul's abrupt change of policy were the tragic collapse of his movement on Haiti, the military necessity of some adequate base of supplies for his colonial adventure, the

closely impending breach of the peace with England, and the consequent stringent demand upon his war chest. He had something to sell, valueless to him, but to his customer of priceless value. He demanded not all it was worth but all he could get. It had cost him nothing but a promise, and the proceeds would be pure gain. His exultant words were:

> Sixty millions for an occupation that will not perhaps last a day.'

The quickness of the transaction, the magnitude of the profit, seemed to cancel his Haitien losses and at the same time to eliminate a possible adversary from his future fields of battle.

Monroe entered the vineyard at the eleventh hour, after Livingston had borne the burden and heat of the day. Yet the American people made his wages not only equal to Livingston's but greater. He returned home to be again governor of Virginia, Secretary of State and Secretary of War in Madison's Cabinet, and for two terms President of the United States. His successful conduct of the negotiations for the Louisiana purchase contributed to his exaltation, while Livingston in the tangled controversies over the French spoliation claims lost the glory acquired from the purchase and came out of the affair with reputation tarnished and temper embittered. Many careful students of this epoch in American history have hesitated to ascribe to Monroe any conspicuous or decisive share in the purchase. They thus set themselves in opposition to the practical judgment of Monroe's contemporaries. On this point it is difficult to believe that contemporary judgment was not right. On Livingston's own testimony Talleyrand made him an offer on April 11, before Monroe reached Paris, and in response to this offer of the whole of Louisiana the American minister's highest bid was 20,000,000 francs, out of which the spoliation claims were to be paid. Two days later, after extended conference with Monroe, Livingston received from Marbois the same offer and did not refuse to pay 80,000,000 francs, allowing 20,000,000 francs for the spoliation claims alone. What had happened in the interval?

One thing had happened, and only one. James Monroe had reached Paris *in full possession of Jefferson's ideas and with ample authority to meet the propositions of the opposite party in whatever form they might be offered.* It is plain that Talleyrand was a mere interloper; Marbois was the French minister of finance, and Marbois only had been authorized by Napoleon to effect the sale. Yet Marbois came to Livingston only after a full day had been allowed for conference between the two American ministers. He had received his instructions from Napoleon at daybreak on April 11 and had been ordered to carry them into effect the same day. He postponed action until midnight of April 13. Such delays are not accidents. Marbois waited with a purpose. That purpose was to insure for Livingston the support and counsels of Monroe. The Louisiana Purchase was made through Livingston, but was not effected and could not have been effected until Monroe reached Paris. We may accept Jefferson's letter of July 11, 1803, to Horatio Gates as an adequate conclusion of controversy:

> *The truth is, both have a just portion of merit; and were it necessary or proper, it could be shewn that each has rendered peculiar service and of important value.*

The definitive confirmation by Napoleon of the act of his minister followed on April 30, 1803, and this date was accepted as the date of the treaty. The delay was occasioned by rather ineffectual controversies as to the handling of the spoliation claims and did not affect the terms of the Louisiana Purchase. Even then the profound importance of the transaction was apparent to the participants. Jefferson had already declared that on the event of the mission of Livingston and Monroe hung the future destinies of our country; and as Livingston rose after signing the documents he grasped Monroe's hand and cried, "We have lived long, but this is the noblest work of our lives."

FIFTH ACT.—*The scene is Washington.*

CONSUMMATION OF THE PURCHASE.

"Great souls," said Napoleon, "care little for small morals." It was certainly upon this maxim that the First Consul acted when he sold Louisiana to Jefferson. He had not fulfilled his promise to Spain of an Italian Kingdom for the Duke of Parma, and Louisiana therefore was not his to sell. He had pledged himself solemnly to Charles IV never to alienate the Louisiana territory, and he bartered it away before he acquired actual possession. The French law forbade alienation of any part of the national domain without the consent of the French Chambers, and yet the transfer to the United States was made without the formality of a reference. The final surrender to the American authorities carried no definition of boundaries, as if purposely to confuse the situation and sow seeds of future controversy; all that the American ministers could extract from Talleyrand was the enigmatic utterance, "I can give you no directions. You have made a noble bargain for yourselves. I suppose you will make the most of it." A noble bargain, indeed, it was. More than 500,000,000 acres, costing less than 3 cents an acre! Even Jefferson's penetrating intelligence was influenced by the colossal scale of the transaction. His constitutional scruples against the acquisition of new territory by the Federal Government had yielded to the pressure of the practical demands of the situation. Long before the signature of the treaty of Paris he had resolved to buy New Orleans, and by appropriating $2,000,000 for this purpose Congress had implicitly authorized the transaction. Between the purchase of one square mile and a million square miles there was no essential difference. If one was repugnant to the Constitution, so was the other: if Congress was incompetent to do the one, it was equally incompetent to do the other. But while Jefferson had determined to effect the smaller purchase, the acquisition of an area equal to 13 entire Virginias was more than he had contemplated. The immensity of his success startled and confused him.

It is impossible to believe that to a mind so clear as that of the President the constitutional objections to the purchase of Louisiana seemed greater than to the purchase of New Orleans. Jefferson's difficulty lay not with his own conscience, but with the public conscience. It was essential to his politics that the mind of the country should keep pace with his own mind. A modest increment of the public domain such as was contemplated in the acquisition of New

Orleans alone would have commended itself to the good sense of his fellow countrymen, and would have been justified in their eyes by its pressing necessity and immediate utility. The purchase of so huge an area as Louisiana seemed to require apology and justification. Jefferson's proposed amendments to the Constitution had for their object not the satisfaction of his own scruples, but the elimination of grounds for public apprehension.

Fortunately, these measures were speedily pigeonholed. Livingston wrote that Napoleon's temper justified no delay. Gallatin had already pointed out that under the treaty-making power Congress had the right to acquire new territory. Nicholas could find nothing in the Constitution to limit the treaty-making power. The common sense of the people expressed itself in cordial approbation of the purchase. Only the weak minority of disappointed Federalists prophesied ruin and disaster. The brief debates which followed in Congress showed that both House and Senate were practically unanimous in their agreement that the Government of the United States possessed the power to acquire new territory, either by conquest or by treaty. The treaty of Paris was confirmed by the Senate, the measures necessary for its execution were passed by the House, and Louisiana became part of the national domain of the United States.

As we look back across the one hundred and ten years which divide us from the era of the Louisiana purchase, we are able to discern the fundamental import of this great transaction more clearly than the men who participated in it. We can see now that it marked the true beginning of the national phase of our history. It was not the Declaration of Independence which made a new nation on this continent. It was not Yorktown which created the new nation, nor that treaty by which Great Britain acknowledged the freedom of her revolted colonies. It was not the Constitution of the United States, instituted to bind the confederated colonies into a more perfect union. The act which transformed the confederation of 13 independent Commonwealths into an indissoluble union of indestructible States was the Louisiana purchase. The man who bought Louisiana was the man who created this great Republic of the West.

The critics, who strive to lower to their irreducible minimum Monroe's claim to honor for his work in the Louisiana purchase, are no less adverse to frank recognition of Jefferson's services. They represent his pacific attitude as thinly veiled cowardice and ascribe his success to plain good luck. Enough has been said already to permit a fairer evaluation of his labors. With the old philosopher peace was in very truth his passion, and in its paths he walked with courage as serene as ever guided warrior to the cannon's mouth. The ideals of Thomas Jefferson are the ideals of the America of our own day—freedom of thought and freedom of speech; liberty of action within the limits of the law; trust in the people and respect for majority rule; political development based on public education; industrial development based on the national advancement of science; the abolition of slavery in every form, whether religious or social or political or commercial; and above all and best of all, peace rather than war. The creed of Jefferson remains to-day the creed of America.

Peace is indeed the most important of all things for us, except preserving an erect and independent attitude.

That man has little imagination and less heart who can in spirit watch the old President, as he sat for two anxious years in the White House, pondering the dangers and the destinies of the young Republic he had done so much to create, and deny his great share in this capital achievement of our national life. To conceive is easy, to execute is difficult; but to risk fame and fortune, to rest the public honor and the national existence on the rule of right rather than on the rule of might, on the validity of conscience and the majesty of righteousness, and to abide the result with unshrinking heart—that is the bravest thing and the best thing of which our poor humanity has shown itself capable.

St. Louis, *April 30, 1913.*

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